



Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization

County-City Building
555 South 10th Street - Suite 213
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
(402) 441-7491

Recommended Grant Awards for Job Access & Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs FY 2010-11

Report to Lincoln MPO Technical Advisory Committee: August 26, 2010 Summation of *Project Selection Task Force* Grant Award Recommendations

Federal legislation (SAFETEA-LU) provides funding for Federal surface transportation programs through FY 2009 and extended through FY 2010. This legislation requires projects seeking Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds through the Job Access & Reverse Commute (Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317) programs to be competitively selected and derived from a locally developed *Coordinated Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*. Based upon the Lincoln MPO Plan, a call for projects for JARC and New Freedom proposals was issued on June 1, 2010, lasting approximately six weeks. During that time, five applications were received for a separate projects (3-JARC and 2-NF) requesting these funds to be used for a portion of project operating costs.

Project Selection Task Force

The MPO Technical Advisory Committee created the advisory *Project Selection Task Force* to review and prioritize project proposals for the JARC and New Freedom programs. All project proposals were reviewed to conform to the guidelines established by FTA and evaluated and prioritized based upon the selection criteria identified in the *Coordinated Transportation Plan*. Projects deemed most important in addressing the community's needs are recommended for funding according to the attached allocations.

The *Project Selection Task Force* members include the following*:

1. Lincoln-Lancaster Planning Department, Transportation Planner, Mike Brienzo
2. Lincoln StarTran, Transit Planner, Brian Praeuner
3. Lincoln Urban Development Department, Community Planner, Wynn Hjermsstad
4. Human Services Federation, Executive Director, Rick Carter
5. Lincoln-Lancaster Health Department, Health Promotion & Outreach, Mike Heyl
6. Nebraska Department of Roads, Rail and Public Transportation Division, Wayne Masek

(*) Task Force members with a project proposal under review will recuse from voting on projects

Task Force recommendations are forwarded to the MPO Technical Committee for their review and action. The recommended project funding for each FTA Program is attached.

Grant Awards Summary

Job Access & Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs FY 2010-11

Job Access & Reverse Commute Program

Lincoln Literacy Council – Workforce Readiness English Program for New Americans

Program Proposal

This proposal is to use Job Access funds to develop a door-to-door **transportation van service and voucher program** for refugees and their preschool children and infants in traveling to and from work-readiness English classes. The Lincoln Literacy Council provides such classes in various locations in Lincoln on weekdays and Saturdays. These classes are crucial to refugees and new Americans in the community in becoming employable and achieving self-sufficiency. The *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* indicates that low-income people from the Literacy Council's service area lack adequate transportation and notes there are cultural and linguistic barriers for non-English speakers in accessing transportation. The Lincoln Literacy Council primarily serves low-income, non-English-speaking refugees and new Americans and has experience in providing the mix of efficient, effective transportation and language services necessary to refugees to become employable.

The transportation and voucher program focuses on providing agency administered van rides and "gasoline vouchers" to encourage a self administered ride provision for individuals and families for low-income people between their residence and place of employment, job training, or education. These services are intended to supplement existing nonprofit van service which is at its limits of practical use, operating six days a week.

Discussion

This is the third year this program is recommended for funding. This years program builds upon the successes of previous years JARC-supported transportation services program that assists clients in accessing instruction that prepares them for the job market. The target group and existing need is well defined, and the program currently provides service that averages approximately 200 passenger miles per week. The program has been expanded to provide gas vouchers for evening health class for women and have developed procedures to maximize efficiency and assure appropriate use. The management plan appears to be well developed and this has a proven coordination and outreach program. The administration plan and project budget is well developed with the potential of becoming self-sustaining with the assistance of the Cooper Foundation and Lincoln Literacy Council funds applied in this start-up program .

The *Project Selection Task Force* ranked this project as their first choice with the following JARC grant funding recommendation. This is 100% of the funds requested.

JA Funds Requested: \$28,912

Recommended Funding: \$28,912

StarTran/City of Lincoln – Subsidize StarTran Bus Routes

Program Proposal

The **StarTran Bus Route** project proposal is to use Job Access & Reverse Commute (JARC) funds to fill a gap in unmet transportation need by providing transportation for low-income persons and persons with disabilities to access employment and job training opportunities. Specifically, funding will be used to subsidize two bus routes identified in the approved Transit Development Plan. These two routes, the “Havelock/Heart Hospital” and “West A/Gaslight” routes, are key routes in providing employment opportunities by serving new employment centers that are not being served by StarTran today. Route service on both routes will operate on weekdays from 5:15 am - 7:10 pm and Saturdays from 5:55 am - 7:10 pm. Regular service on “Havelock/Heart Hospital” will operate every 30 minutes during weekday peaks and 60 minutes during mid-days and Saturdays and the “West A / Gaslight” route will operate every 60 minutes all day with no service for two-hours during mid-day.

New employment centers include: South Walmart, Nebraska Heart Institute, and Menards Home Improvement Center. These routes will also provide increased service to the other employment centers including Kawasaki, Pfizer, Verizon, Immigration & Naturalization Services, Lincoln Plating, 70th & Pioneer Commercial Center and West A Commercial Center. The objective for the two new bus routes is to achieve approximately 168,416 trips to new employment centers in the third year of service.

Discussion

This is the third year this program is recommended for funding. This is a needed service filling a gap in unmet transportation needs which is documented in a well developed transit service plan. This supports the strategies identified in the *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* and appears to well designed to meet the goal of increasing access to jobs for low-income, welfare-recipients and persons with disabilities. The management plan appears to be well developed and StarTran has a proven coordination and outreach program. StarTran has qualified and experienced personnel able to provide this service and has provided a well developed implementation plan.

The administration plan is well developed with the potential of effective in meeting the identified service needs. These two bus routes were continued to build upon previous years success having met their stated ridership goals and are projecting an increase in the number of trips provided the past year by 1.2%. A continuing concern expressed by the *Project Selection Task Force* is that the JARC funds identified for the StarTran project are initiative funds that only can cover up to 50% of the total project costs and sustaining this program is dependent upon the City of Lincoln budgeting process.

The *Project Selection Task Force* ranked this project as their second choice with the following JARC grant funding recommendation. This is 100% of the funds requested.

JA/RC Funds Requested: \$371,862

Recommended Funding: \$371,862

Center for People in Need – Driver Voucher Program

Program Proposal

This is a **Driver Voucher Program** developed by the Center for People in Need (CFPIN) that reimburses volunteer drivers on a per trip basis for providing eligible low-income workers with transportation to and from employment and employment-related activities. This program is targeted toward eligible low-income workers who are responsible for locating a driver and making the transportation arrangements that best suits their needs. Program funding is used to reimburse a volunteer driver on a per-trip basis for car-related expenses. The reimbursement is a set fee of \$5.00 per round trip, \$2.50 per one-way trip, and \$10.00 per round trip outside the city limits. The intent of the program is to provide transportation for low-income persons to access employment and job training opportunities. Priority for participation is given to those who are unable to utilize public transportation and who are not eligible for any other type of funding for transportation.

The focus of this program is to increase mobility for employment and employment-related activities. This is accomplished in this program by distributing travel vouchers to approved clients in assisting them in gaining full employment through training and other related to employment activities. Documentation on each trip is provided to the program administrator prior to reimbursement.

Discussion

This is the third year the Center for People in Need program has applied for funding through the JARC program. This was a new program and got off to a slow start due to voucher distribution and documentation problems. This program is still developing but program administration is now fully developed and the snags appear to have been solved. Coordination with other agencies and transportation services were initiated as part of program development appear to have improved.

The *Project Selection Task Force* reviewed this application along with project activity over the past two years of JARC funding in relation to stated program goals. This is a new program developed by the Center for People in Need and appears to still be in the developing stages. As the kinks in the voucher distribution and documentation are improved, we expect this program to become a valuable asset to the community. However, the committee is looking for “significant progress” in this program meeting in meeting the stated goals before recommending additional funding.

JARC Grant Activity (as of 7/28/10)

<u>Grant Year</u>	<u>Request</u>	<u>Award</u>	<u>Reimbursement</u>	<u>Balance</u>
2008	\$90,000	\$45,000	\$29,827	\$15,173
2009	65,000	65,000	0	65,000
2010	50,000	0	0	0
Sum	\$205,000	\$105,000	\$29,827	\$80,173

The *Project Selection Task Force* is recommending “deferring action” on this application and will review it again in six months. It was agreed that improved program activity will need to be shown that reflects the program’s goals before additional JARC grant funding can be recommended. By deferring action on this application, the Committee is saying it likes the program and will recommend further support once the program is meeting its stated goals.

JA/RC Funds Requested: \$50,000

Recommended Funding: *deferred action*

New Freedom Program

League of Human Dignity, Inc. – Extended Hours Service (EHS)

Program Proposal

The League of Human Dignity is continuing its “Extended Hours Service” (EHS) program that was converted from a foundation funded “demonstration project” two years ago. The on-going program continues to provide accessible transportation services to Lincoln’s mobility limited residents. This program extends service beyond the hours and days provided by StarTran’s ADA-compliant service. Under this program, up to 70 trips per week are provided within the City of Lincoln for any purpose, other than medical, and during weekends and legal holidays when StarTran buses do not run. The program strategy is to address gaps and needs in transportation service for the mobility limited which is in need of extended transportation services as identified in the *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan*. The “Extended Hours Service” program is provided on weekdays from 5:00 pm to 11:00 pm, Saturdays from 8:00 am to 11:00 pm, and Sundays and Holidays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. This continues to fill a gap in Handi-Van transportation services not provided by StarTran Handi-Van operations.

The League is continuing to use the services of Transport Plus as a contract provider which is a well developed and experienced provider of Handi-Van transportation services. Transport Plus has been contract provider of Handi-Van reliever services for StarTran for more than seven years. The League has over 35 years of continued service in Lincoln and Lancaster County in providing services to persons with disabilities. The League also has a well developed relationships with StarTran and is a founding member of the Human Services Federation for Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Discussion

This is the third year this program is recommended for funding. The “Extended Hours Service” project is administered by the League of Human Dignity fills a portion of the widening gap in transportation services by providing mobility for individuals with limited mobility. The foundation developed and funded the “demonstration project” that was successful in filling a need and this grant will enable the program to continue to be fully operational. Coordination is called for in the *Coordinated Transportation Plan* which is a key element in this project.

This program extends the existing Handi-Van operations and the overall plan appears to have the ability and resources to become an effective and sustaining program. Experience is an important element in program success that is evident in this program. The League is an established provider of services to persons with disabilities and Transport Plus has been a trusted contract provider of Handi-Van services in Lincoln for years. They have the personnel and infrastructure in place to take reservations, check eligibility, and schedule rides within the contract limits. This type of program is identified in the *Coordinated Transportation Plan* and is an eligible activity under the New Freedom Program guidelines. This fills a gap in local transit services, is cost effective since it administered primarily on the League of Human Dignity resources and is operated on a cost reimbursement basis.

The *Project Selection Task Force* supports this project for New Freedom grant funding with the following recommendation. This is 100% of the funds requested.

New Freedom Funds Requested: \$44,440

Recommended Funding: \$44,440

Lincoln Seniors Transportation Program (LSTP)

Program Proposal

The Lincoln Seniors Transportation Program (LSTP) increases transportation options for older adults in the city of Lincoln by supporting paid staff to coordinate the recruiting and training of volunteers to provide transportation to the elderly. This is a volunteer based social transportation program where volunteers provide the transportation to those unable to drive or access other transportation services to a destination. Trip destinations will continue to be non-medical. The program has developed an infrastructure that uses a paid staff to coordinate these services to the elderly. Staff collaborates with the Seniors Foundation, Lincoln Aging Partners and Southeast Community College (SECC) to provide program support for social transportation services to older adults. to provide these transportation services. This year the program is seeking to partner with Easter Seals and expand service into the rural areas of Lancaster County.

As adults age, individuals 70 year and older, they lose their ability to drive or travel on their own and can become isolated. Social isolating in older adults tends to have a negative impact of their health and their ability to care for themselves. This program will enable older adults to engage in life-enriching activities such as traveling to the library, recreation center, church, or a volunteer job and enable them participate fully in society. This program is not seen as competing with other forms of public or private transportation because of the high cost or the a private taxi ride and the difficulty older adults have in accessing and using fixed route transit service. The Handi-Van program offers service but this is limited to individuals with disabilities and social uses are a low priority.

Discussion

This is the third year for the Lincoln Seniors Transportation formal volunteer social transportation program. These types of programs are relatively new but has been proven effective in Lincoln and the existing program currently has greater demand than available volunteers. The Seniors Foundation is seeking to work with Easter Seal to expand services into the rural Lancaster County areas. This is a well developed program, developing from a pilot program in 2008. This program has a number of check points which will require volunteer drivers will undergo background checks and must complete an application, provide proof of insurance, and participate in a “behind the wheel” driver evaluation. All riders will need to be pre-registered and rides must be scheduled.

The Seniors Foundation has developed experience in serving older adults and have the ability, along with Easter Seals to continue an effective and sustaining program. This type of program is identified in the *Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan* and is well designed to meet the goal of increasing access and is an eligible activity under the New Freedom Program guidelines. The program has proven to be cost effective, especially when the time and resources of volunteers are factored into the program. This program has proven to a valuable addition to the community that is expected to continue growing and expanding into new area of service over time.

The *Project Selection Task Force* given this project as their full support for New Freedom grant funding. The funding request was increased this fiscal year but is to cover two years of program funding. Since the New Freedom program funds are limited, they are only able to provide 94.6% of the funds requested or \$42,530 per year each for FY 2011 and FY 2012.

New Freedom Funds Requested: \$89,924

Recommended Funding: \$85,060



Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization

County-City Building
555 South 10th Street - Suite 213
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
(402) 441-7491

Draft

Selection Committee Proposed Project Awards for Job Access & Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs FY 2010-11

Project	Sponsoring Agency	Project Title	Requested Funds	Local Match	Total Costs	Operating / Planning	FFY	Type	Recommended Grant Award
Section 5316: Job Access & Reverse Commute Program									
1	Lincoln Literacy Council	Transportation Support for New Americans Preparing for Work Entry	\$ 28,912	\$ 159,158	\$ 188,070	Operating	2011	JA/RC	\$ 28,912
2	StarTran/City of Lincoln	Subsidize StarTran Bus Route	\$ 371,862	\$ 371,862	\$ 743,724	Operating	2011	JA/RC	\$ 371,862
3	Center for People in Need	Driver Voucher Program	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000	Operating	2011	JA/RC	deferred ⁽¹⁾
JA/RC Funds Requested:			\$ 450,774			Recommended Funding:			\$ 400,774
JA/RC Available:			\$ 468,287			Carry-over Funds:			\$ 67,513
Section 5317: New Freedom Program									
1	League of Human Dignity, Inc.	Extended Hours Service (EHS)	\$ 44,440	\$ 44,440	\$ 88,880	Operating	2011	NF	\$ 44,440
2	Lincoln Seniors Transportation Program ⁽²⁾	Lincoln Seniors Transportation Program	\$ 89,924	\$ 178,186	\$ 268,110	Operating	2011	NF	\$ 85,060
New Freedom Funds Requested:			\$ 134,364			Recommended Funding:			\$ 129,500
New Freedom Funds Available:			\$ 129,500			Carry-over Funds:			0

* July 28, 2010

F:\FILES\NCSMDB\JARC-NF-Sec 5310\Project Selection\2010\Grant Awards Summary_072810.wpd

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ The recommendation is to “defer action” the Center for People in Need - Driver Voucher Program application for F 2011 based on performance criteria to be re-evaluated in 6 months.

⁽²⁾ The *Lincoln Seniors Transportation Program* is requesting two years of grant funding for FY 2010-11 and FY 2011-12.